DONATE NOW
CLICK&PLEDGE

"We know through painful experience that freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed."

(Photo credit: www.indamixworldwide.com)

## To Hear Audio

Martin Luther King, Jr

## How to Download

- In Windows, right-click and save to disk;
- Mac OS 9 users click and hold, Download Link to Disk;
- Mac OS X users, click once and file will open in Quicktime or your favorite audio player.

Back to Downloads

# Martin Luther King, Jr.

(1929 - 1968)

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was a vital figure of the modern era. His lectures and dialogues stirred the concern and sparked the conscience of a generation. The movements and marches he led brought significant changes in the fabric of American life through his courage and selfless devotion. This devotion gave direction to thirteen years of civil rights activities. His charismatic leadership inspired men and women, young and old, in this nation and around the world.

In 1957, he was elected president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, an organization formed to provide new leadership for the now burgeoning civil rights movement. The ideals for this organization he took from Christianity; its operational techniques from Gandhi.

In the 11 year period between 1957 and 1968, King traveled over 6 million miles and spoke over 2500 times, appearing wherever there was injustice, protest, and action. In these years, he led a massive protest in Birmingham, Alabama, that caught the attention of the entire world, providing what he called a coalition of conscience and inspiring his "Letter from a Birmingham Jail".

He planned the drives in Alabama for voter registration; he directed the march on Washington, D.C., of 250,000 people to whom he delivered his address, "l Have a Dream." He conferred with President John F. Kennedy and campaigned for President Lyndon B. Johnson; he was arrested upwards of 20 times and assaulted at least four times; he was awarded five honorary degrees; was named Man of the Year by *Time* magazine in 1963; and became not only the symbolic leader of American Blacks but also a world figure.

Dr. King's concept of "somebodiness," which symbolized the celebration of human worth and the conquest of subjugation, gave Black and poor people hope and a sense of dignity. His philosophy of nonviolent direct action, and his strategies for rational and non-destructive social change, galvanized the conscience of this nation and reordered its priorities.

On the evening of April 4, 1968, while standing on the balcony of his motel room in Memphis, Tennessee, he was killed. The next day he was to lead a protest march in sympathy with striking garbage workers of that city.

**For more information:**

- Letter from Birmingham Jail
- The King Center



The Freedom Archives * 522 Valencia Street San Francisco, CA 94110
Phone: (415) 863-9977 | E-mail: info [at] freedomarchives [dot] org